

UNITED STATES-INDIA RELATIONS: THE NEED FOR UNITED STATES AID

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 13, 1996

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the current status of United States-India relations.

Over the past decade the relationship between our countries has been increasingly positive. United States trade and business investments in India have grown to an all-time high. This growth should continue, for India recently reaffirmed its commitment to democracy by conducting the largest democratic election in history. Over 65 percent of India's 640 million eligible voters participated in the election.

At such a time, with so many positive developments, it is a serious misreading of history for us to even consider freezing aid to India, as some are now proposing. I urge those who are so inclined to listen to the warnings of Ambassador Frank Wisner, senior career ambassador to India, who recently said India would view such an attempt by Congress to be "a very negative message."

Undeniably, there have been human rights abuses in India in years past. But progress in this area is being made, as reflected most dramatically by the election results in Punjab Province. There, the ruling party which allegedly committed abuses against Muslims was thrown out by a Muslim-leaning party. Another reflection of progress was the decision by both the State Department and the United Nations to commend India for its recent resolution of human rights problems. These are trends to be encouraged, not discouraged by denying additional assistance.

In fact, a cutoff of United States developmental assistance would hurt the very people who most need help, hampering the intentions of newly elected Prime Minister Deve Gowda to improve the living conditions of the poorest citizens of India.

Finally, India's geographic position continues to be of great strategic importance in light of recent transactions between China and Pakistan.

For these reasons, and more, I believe those who want to send a symbolic message are jeopardizing our relationship with India and putting at peril United States national security interests in and around that region of the world.

CELEBRITY READ PROGRAM A GREAT SUCCESS

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 13, 1996

Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to invite my colleagues to join with me in congratulating and thanking the United Way of Essex and West Hudson. The United Way held their annual Celebrity Read Program which encourages inner-city youth to broaden their horizons and have hope for their futures. The program asks adults, both famous and not so famous,

to attend classrooms and read passages from their favorite book about the accomplishments of people of color.

This year's program had a phenomenal level of participation, with twice as many reading volunteers as last year. Their words of inspiration touched the lives of more than 10,000 children. Among the more well-known participants were news reporters; Terrie Williams and Reggie Harris and former New York Giants football player, Harry Carson. One of the aspects of the program is that their definition of celebrity includes local business people, entrepreneurs, and everyday citizens from the community. This program makes it possible for individuals to take part in their community, share their wealth of knowledge and experience, and be a source of inspiration to our inner-city youth.

It is wonderful to see that this outstanding program has not just continued but grown since last year. I urge other communities, nationwide, to follow their lead and motivate children with programs such as this one. The Celebrity Read Program is one that should take place in as many cities as possible. I would also like to extend a most sincere thank you to the Celebrity Read Program and to the 400 celebrity readers for taking the time to interact with the leaders of the next generation. We should celebrate children for they are our greatest resource.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me this opportunity to share with my colleagues some of the exciting events that are taking place in the 10th Congressional District of New Jersey to ensure our future.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. BILL BARRETT

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 12, 1996

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3603) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes:

Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of this amendment, which would emphasize the need for farmers and processors affected by the Karnal bunt quarantine to know exactly how the Federal Government intends to provide compensation and assistance.

This amendment is for the benefit of those who are currently subject to special restrictions as a result of Karnal bunt infestation, but have not yet been informed what action the Government plans to take to compensate them. While USDA already has taken steps to offset costs to producers in many areas, there are areas where USDA has not yet taken that action and those producers are anxiously awaiting this important information. It is reasonable to expect the Government, which imposes the quarantine and restrictions on mar-

keting wheat in the areas afflicted, to also provide a plan for compensation in a timely matter to all affected.

USDA has been aggressive in identifying and taking steps to control and eradicate Karnal bunt. This has been critical in protecting producers in areas not afflicted with Karnal bunt as well as in preserving our export markets. For this, I commend USDA's efforts.

Nevertheless, I understand the concerns of producers and processors in areas where USDA's job is not finished and I urge my colleagues join me in support of this sense of Congress.

REMEMBERING ISRAELI MIA'S

HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 13, 1996

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in remembering the Israeli soldiers captured by the Syrians during the 1982 Israeli war with Lebanon.

On June 11, 1982, an Israeli tank unit battled with a Syrian armored unit in the Bekaa Valley in northeastern Lebanon. Sgt. Zachary Baumel, 1st Sgt. Zvi Feldman and Cpl. Yehudah Katz were captured by the Syrians that day. They were identified as the Israeli tank crew, and reported missing in Damascus. The Israeli tank, flying the Syrian and Palestinian flags, was greeted with cheers from bystanders.

Since that terrible day in 1982, the Israeli and United States Governments have been doing their utmost to obtain any possible information about the fate of these missing soldiers, working with the offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations, and other international bodies. According to the Geneva Convention, Syria is responsible for the fates of the Israeli soldiers because the area in Lebanon where the soldiers disappeared was continually controlled by Syria. To this day, despite promises made by the Syrian Government and by the PLO, very little information has been forthcoming about the condition of Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, and Yehudah Katz.

June 11 marked the anniversary of the day that these soldiers were reported missing in action. Fourteen pain-filled years have passed since their families have seen their sons, and still President Assad has not revealed their whereabouts.

One of these missing soldiers, Zachary Baumel, is an American citizen, from my district in Brooklyn, NY. An ardent basketball fan, Zachary began his studies at the Hebrew School of Boro Park. In 1979, he moved to Israel with other family members and continued his education at Yeshivat Hesder, where religious studies are integrated with army service. When the war with Lebanon began, Zachary was completing his military service and was looking forward to attending Hebrew University, where he had been accepted to study psychology. But fate decreed otherwise and on June 11, 1982, he disappeared with Zvi Feldman and Yehudah Katz.

Zachary's parents Yoni and Miriam Baumel have been relentless in their pursuit of information about Zachary and his compatriots. I have worked closely with the Baumels, as well